Release of POWs from Pakistani jails

†2623. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had entered into any agreement on release of Indian POWs lodged in Pakistan's jails at the time of release of about one lakh prisoners of Pakistan after ceasefire in 1971;

(b) if so, the roadmap thereof;

(c) whether any process has now been prescribed to search 71 Indian POWs of 1971 war;

(d) the assistance that would be extended by Pakistan in this process; and

(e) the facility that would be extended by Government of Pakistan to the kins of missing Indian soldiers of 1971 war?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) After the Simla agreement of 1972 both countries had agreed to release all POWs in their custody. Pakistan does not acknowledge the presence of any Prisoners of War in its jails. However, according to available information, there are 74 Indian Prisoners of War in Pakistani jails, including 54 since 1971-72.

(b) to (e) Government have been consistently taking up the issue of POWs with Pakistan. During the visit of the External Affairs Minister to Pakistan in January 2007, the issue of POWs was again taken up with Pakistan authorities. Pakistan agreed to accepted a delegation of family members of the missing defence personnel to various jails in Pakistan.

Agreement on Indo-US nuclear deal

2624. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any talks between India and US were recently held to reach an amicable agreement on a civil nuclear deal between the two countries signed in July 2005;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether India has made it clear to US that they would not accept any deviation from July 2005 and March 2006 Agreements already signed between the two countries; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government of India to reported statement of United States, Under Secretary of State that "U.S. has done its part on N-deal" and now "Ball is in India's court"?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a to (c) Talks on a bilateral India-US Agreement on Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy were held with US representatives in New Delhi from March 25—27, 2007 and in Cape Town (South Africa) from 16—20 April, 2007. India expects the bilateral India-US Cooperation Agreement to reflect the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement and March 2006 Separation Plan.

Accessibility of Indian Embassies

2625. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that embassies and consular offices of India are not accessible on phone at any given or specified time;

(b) in what way could Indians or people working with our Embassies and Consulates get in touch on phone;

(c) whether it is a fact that our Embassies and Consulates give on line numbers and refuse to answer phones even in emergencies;

(d) whether Government have been able to identify such tactics to create in accessibility; and

(e) the positive measures that would be initiated to sober up our displomats failing in their duties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) No. Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad make special efforts to ensure that they can be contacted in different modes. Telephone/fax numbers and e-mails of Embassies/ Consultates are available on the internet, through links on the website of the Ministry of External Affairs. A large number of Missions have their own